

Clark County Comprehensive Plan Update
RESPONSE TO DEIS COMMENTS
Position Statement 4,
ON THE DISCOVERY CORRIDOR

The concept of a Discovery Corridor was popularized by “The Economic Development Strategic Plan” produced by the Columbia River Economic Development Council in 2002. Before that time, the concept had also been discussed, mostly by the Port of Ridgefield. The concept, in grossly simple terms, is one of a high-tech, knowledge-based job development area along Interstate 5 from the County Fairgrounds area, north through LaCenter. The strategy of a corridor was devised to support the goal of “Developing an industrial land base conducive to the recruitment of targeted industries and the expansion of existing businesses.”

Public comments regarding the discovery corridor have been mixed. There seemed to be general support for job development areas. There was also some appreciation of the intuitive sense of utilizing the remaining capacity in the I-5 corridor. The remaining capacity is north bound in the AM peak travel time, and southbound in the PM. However, there has also been broad criticism of the concept as sprawling or anti-growth management. Concerns have also been expressed about the distance of the Discovery Corridor from existing cities and the suitability of the area, especially because poor infiltration, for intense development of the land.

The proposed land use map brings the southern portion of the Discovery Corridor into the urban growth boundary. This area had previously been designated as urban reserve, indicating an early intention of urbanization. It was decided that the remainder of the discovery corridor, including the expansions at the Ridgefield and La Center Interstate junctions, would be considered for the accommodation of growth beyond the 20-year planning horizon.

Though the hearings on the growth management plan update have yet to occur, staff can speculate about the findings that led to the inclusion of the southern portion of the Corridor.

1. There is a quantified need for additional commercial and industrial urban lands.
2. There is a particular need for large parcels of land which are purportedly available in the Discovery Corridor
3. There has been support of the concept of the Discovery Corridor by the Clark County, Board of County Commissioners.

The expansion of this area was limited to only the southern most tip of the corridor.

1. It was decided that there would be wider geographic spread of the new land for jobs. Therefore, some of the demand resulted in expansion near Fishers Swale, Orchards, Battle Ground, etc.
2. Certain areas of the Discovery Corridor are more environmentally constrained.
3. There is a serious lack of infrastructure in the area.
4. The efficiency and affordability of providing urban infrastructure along the Discovery Corridor was found, in the Focused Public Investment Study, to not compare favorably to other areas of the County.
5. There is currently no fixed-route transit service northward on I-5. It may also be found, as a result of our planning process, that transit service may be further limited.